

Communications Plan

No SAD RWG member present during comment review.

As with many of the requirements for plans outlined in the Manual, it is not reasonable to expect a communications plan specific to each project. We need to recognize and provide for generic communications plans and we need to establish thresholds for when we will require project specific communications plans.

Recommend this section be deleted from manual. Response: Project Communication plans have been required by ER 5-1-11

Scope

The purpose of this reference document is to describe the Communications Plan, which serves to establish a good internal and external communication strategy and determine the information needs of all project stakeholders – who needs what information, when they will need it, how it will be given to them, and by whom. The complexity of the project will determine the appropriate level of detail for the Communications Plan. The Communications Plan is a supporting plan that facilitates the implementation of the Project Management Plan (PMP). Communications, *Quality Management*[REF1024], *Risk Management*[REF1023], and *Change Management*[REF1025] Plans are developed currently in the iterative Program/Project Planning Phase.

The initiation of *PMP Development*[PROC1012] triggers the development of the Communications Plan.

Distribution

Project Manager (PM)

Project Delivery Team (PDT)

Public Affairs Office (PAO)

Response: Comment rejected. BP/P2 Program Office changed to Configuration Management Board. See glossary

Responsibilities:

The Project Manager initiates the development of the Communications Plan and is responsible for incorporating it into the project's Project Management Plan (PMP). The PM may consider asking for Public Affairs Office support for the development of the Communications Plan based on the complexity and sensitivity of the project.

The PDT is responsible for assisting the PM in determining all stakeholder project communications requirements.

Communications Plan Format & Content:

The Contents of the Communications Plan could include but not be limited to the following:

- Project Stakeholder Communication Requirements - An analysis of communication requirements of all project stakeholders.
- Project Stakeholders Communication Strategy
- Key Messages for Project Stakeholders
- Evaluate Effectiveness of Communication Strategy – Document in lessons learned during project execution and project closeout.
- Reporting Relationships – Describe in sufficient detail project reporting relationships
- Collection and filing - How will project information be gathered and stored. To include describing the criteria to be used to determine the frequency that Project Delivery Team will progress and update project activities.
- Communication Distribution Structure – Who gets what type of information, what methods will be used to distribute various types of information. If applicable, discuss the use of web sites and other technology.
- Description of information of be distributed – What is the content of information distributed.
- Production schedules – When will each type of communication be produced.
- Criteria to determine the frequency to conduct Project Delivery Team performance review meetings.
- Method of accessing information between scheduled communications.
- Methods for updating and refining the Communications Plan as the project progresses and changes.

Communications Plan Methodology

1. Identify project stakeholders.

The PDT needs to ask who is affected by the project? Who affects the project? How and why? Consider geography, economics, quality of life, and political sensitivity when determining internal and external interested parties. Document this information for easy access by the PDT, review and update as needed.

2. What are the problems, concerns and/or issues?

Issues to be considered include:

- Technical
- Institutional
- Political (Tribal, Federal, State, Local)
- Environmental
- Economic/Fiscal
- Cultural
- Other

How do these problems/concerns/issues affect the project?

3. Listen, understand, and verify expectations, problems, concerns, and issues.

How to get to the issues:

- Talk with local sponsors/customers
- Look at existing documents
- Talk with interest groups

The customer has a significant role in the development of the Communications Plan.

4. The PM prepares a draft communication requirements document that outlines and analyzes information needs of project stakeholders, then designs a communication strategy for each stakeholder with linkages to appropriate project milestones.

Determine key decision points in the project/study, according to the following:

1. Information requirements/expectations.
2. Project schedule milestones.
3. Note impacts, and risk (addressed in risk management plan)

Analyze the relationship between key decision points in the project and the stakeholders' concerns.

Develop key messages for each key decision point that consider the following characteristics for an effective message (ensure a match with project goals and objectives):

Timeliness
Clarity
Honesty
Sensitivity
Relevance
Openness
Consistency

Consider use of the following:

Public Affairs Office personnel
Request professional assistance, such as facilitators to conduct meetings
Note potential schedule/budget constraints
Plan for 360-degree feedback with interested parties
Use of Partnering during the design phase (Design Charetts) or the construction phase

5. PM and PDT review and comment on draft stakeholder communication requirements document.
6. PM consolidates PDT review comments of communications requirements document, and adds enough additional information to address the recommended Communications Plan contents.
7. PM submits Communications Plan to the PDT for review.
8. PM and Project Delivery Team review the Communications Plan.
9. When the Communications Plan is finalized, the PM incorporates it into the project's PMP by pasting it into the appropriate data field in P3e.
10. Evaluate effectiveness and document in Lessons Learned[PROC1021], as required throughout the life-cycle of the project.
 - a. Did the strategy allow us to define the playing field?
 - b. Did the strategy allow us to frame the issues?
 - c. Did the strategy bind us to our partners publicly?
 - d. Was the majority of the dialogue fact-based, rather than emotional?